

# The LOVE R.

By MARMADUKE MYRTLE, Gent.

— *Quid non mortalia pectora Cogis* — Virg.

Thursday, April 22. 1714.

To Mr. MYRTLE.

SIR,

I Suppose, Mr. Myrtle, that you begin to repent you Published my last Letter to you, since your late Indulgence to me occasions this frequent Trouble; I don't know, Sir, what it may be to you, but I am sure it is real Pleasure to me to embrace all Opportunities of shewing my self your humble Servant; therefore give me leave to talk before so great a Master of Love, and to use the Frite Simile of making a Declaration of War before *Hannibal*.

Among all those Passions, to which the frailty and weakness of Man subject him, there is not any that extends such a boundless and despotick Empire over the whole Species, as that of Love. The Meek, the Mild, and the Humble are Strangers to Envy, Anger and Ambition; but neither the Malicious, the Cholerick, or the Proud can say their Hearts have been always free from the Power of Love. This has subdued the exalted Minds of the most aspiring Tyrants, and has melted the most Sanguine Complexion into an effeminate Softness. An undaunted Hero has been known to tremble when he approached the Fair, and the mighty *Hercules* let fall his Club at a Woman's Feet. The Scholar, the Statesman, and the Soldier have all been Lovers, and the most ignorant Swain has neglected both his Flocks and Pipe to woe *Daphne* or *Sylvia*.

But tho' Love be a Passion which is thus common to all, yet how widely do its Votaries differ in their manner of Address? The pleasing Enjoyment of the admired Object is what they all pursue, and yet few agree in the same methods of obtaining their Ends, or accomplishing their Desires. Every Lover has his particular Whim, and each resolves to follow his own way. Some fancy Money has a Sovereign Charm in it, and that no Rhetorick is so irresistibly prevailing as a Golden Shower. Others think to take their Mistresses as they do Towns, by Bombarding or Undermining them; if they can't beat them down by force of Arms, they'll try to blow them up with false Musick. Some attempt to frighten their Mistresses into a Compliance, and threaten to hang or drown themselves if they refuse to pity them. Others turn Tragedians, and expect to move Compassion by a falling Tear, or a rising Sign. Some depend

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upon Dress, and conclude that if they can catch the Eye they'll soon seize the Heart. One Man affects Gravity, and another Levity, because some Women prefer the Solemnity of a Spaniard to the Gayety of a Frenchman. An handsome Leg has found the way to a Widow's Bed, and a Coquette has been won by a Song or a Caper. A Prude may be caught by a precise Look and a demure Behaviour, and a Platonick Lady has lain with her humble Servant out of a refin'd Friendship, when she would not listen to a Declaration of Love. Some will be attacked in Mode and Figure, and others will have it, that a great Scholar will never make a kind Husband. The witty *Clara* is delighted with Impertinence, and a celebrated Toast has languished for the beautiful Outside of a painted Butterfly. Some Women are allured by the resemblance of their own Follies; and I have seen a Rake, by the help of a whining Accent, triumph over a sanctified Quaker.

But of all the Arts which have been practised by the Men on the other Sex, I have not observed any kind of Address which has been so generally successful as Flattery. Whether it be, that by making a Woman in Love with her self, you thereby engage her to love the Person who makes her so; as who would not be apt to be fond of the Cause which produces so agreeable an Effect? Or whether the Partiality and Self-Love, which most Women abound in, does the more readily induce them to believe, that all the Praise which is given them is really due to their Merit, and therefore they admire you for your Justice: Or whatever other Reason may possibly be assigned for this Weakness, I shall not now go about to enquire; but so it is, that the shortest and surest way to a Woman's Heart is thro' the Road of skilful Flattery. This like a subtle Poyson insinuates it self almost into every Female, and a Dose of it rightly prepared seldom fails to produce an extraordinary Operation. Like a delicious Cordial it meets with an universal Acceptance and Approbation, while Sincerity and Plain-dealing are looked upon as nauseous and disgusting Physick. In opposition to what I here advance, it may perhaps be said we may love the Treason, and yet hate the Traitor. How true this Maxim may be in Politicks (Treachery being a Moral Evil, which, tho' of Use to us for our Safety, is yet sufficient to beget an Aversion in us towards the Wretch who

who is guilty of it) I shan't dispute; but I am sure in Love Affairs it will scarcely hold. For she must be a Woman of uncommon Virtues and Qualifications, who can so nicely distinguish between the Gift and the Giver, as to refuse the one, and yet receive the other. They do not think Flattery a Vice, and therefore can't be persuaded to dislike a Lover for being a Courtier; nay, tho' they are conscious of some of their own Imperfections, yet if their Admirers are not quick-sighted enough to discern them, they are willing to impute their Blindness to their Love; nay, tho' some Defects are grossly visible even to the Lover, yet if he will compliment his Mistress with what she really wants, I dare appeal to the whole Sex, whether either such Incense or the Offerer of it be one Jot nearer the losing their Favour, and whether they are not ever delighted with both the Delusion and the Deceiver. But if they really believe themselves as amiable as the Flatterer tells them they are, then, in point of Gratitude, they conclude themselves obliged to think kindly of their Benefactor; that he is one, none can deny, since the greatest Kindness you can confer on a Mistress is Praise and Commendation. These are those melting Sounds, that soft Musick which never sounds harshly in a Woman's Ear. Before I conclude this Paper, I shall relate a Story which I know to be Fact.

Miss *Witwon'd* was a young Gentlewoman of good Extraction and an handsome Fortune. She was exactly shaped and very pretty: She dress'd and danc'd genteely, and sung sweetly: But notwithstanding these Advantages, (which one wou'd imagine were sufficient to make any one Woman satisfied) she had an insufferable Itch after the Reputation of a Wit. She fancied she had as much Wit as she wanted (tho' indeed she wanted more than ever she'll have) and this Conceit made her fond of scribbling and shewing her Follies that way, as taking great Delight in Applause.

My Friend *Meanwell* is a Gentleman of good Sense and a sound Judgment, he is a professed Enemy to Flattery, and is of Opinion, that to commend without just Grounds, is to rob the Meritorious of that which only of Right belongs to them. He says a Compliment is a modish Lie, and declares he wou'd not be guilty of so much Baseness as to cry up a beautiful Fool for Wit, not even in her own hearing, tho' he were sure to have his Falshood rewarded by the Enjoyment of his Mistress. Undeserved Applause is to him an Argument of either want of Judgment or of Insincerity, and he resolves he will never go about to establish another's Reputation at the Expence of his own. With these honest useless Qualities he has made long but fruitless Courtship to young Miss *Witwon'd*. *Ned Courtly* is a new but violent Pretender to the same Lady. *Ned* is a shallow well-dress'd Coxcomb: He was bred at Court, and is of a graceful and confident Behaviour, tempered with Civility. The shallow Thing can wait at a Distance, and look at her, and with a Smile approach her, and say, Your Ladyship is divinely pretty. He is wonderful happy also in particular Discoveries, and whenever he renews a Visit to his Mistress, she is sure of being presented with some additional Charm, which

would have for ever lain conceal'd, had not *Ned* most luckily found it out. *Ned* quickly perceiv'd Miss *Witwon'd*'s weak side, and carefully watch'd all Opportunities of making his Advantage of it. Miss grows enamour'd of *Ned*'s Company, and begins to despise *Meanwell* as an unpolish'd Clown. She likes *Ned* as she does her Glass, and for the same Reason, that it always shows her her Beauties; and she takes as much Pleasure in hearing him, injudiciously as he does it, give her also the Beauties of her Mind, as she does to see the Glass reflect those of her Body. One Evening, last Week, *Meanwell* had the Honour to sup with her, the Cloth being taken away, she delivered him a Copy of Verses, which she said had been the Product of her leisure Hours, and desired the Opinion of so good a Judge. My Friend had the Patience to read them twice over, finds nothing extraordinary in them, so smilingly returns them with a silent Bow. He was just going to speak his Mind impartially, when in came *Ned Courtly*. He perused and humm'd them over in a seeming Rapture, look'd at the Lady and then at the Paper for almost half an Hour in full Admiration—And then with a better Air than ever Critick spoke, he pronounced that the Author of those Verses had *Congreve*'s Wit, and *Waller*'s Softness, and that there was nothing so completely perfect in all their Works. — The Consequence of this was — *Meanwell* was discarded, because he wou'd be rigidly Honest in Trifles; and *Ned* made his Mistress his Wife, because in spite of Nature he allowed her a Poetess, or, perhaps, very justly, because he really thinks her so.

I am, S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

Vesuvius.

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